

## I Know that My Redeemer Lives

Job 19:23-27 (NIV)

<sup>23</sup> “Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, <sup>24</sup> that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! <sup>25</sup> I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. <sup>26</sup> And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; <sup>27</sup> I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

What do you know? And I don’t mean just things in your head or things you vaguely remember, but what do you unshakably, with absolute confidence, without an ounce of doubt know? Do you know that the sun will still shine and be here tomorrow, that there is no chance that it won’t? Do you know your car, your bank account, your clothes, your home will still be yours tomorrow? Do you know that your family, every single member of it, will still be here?

Maybe what we know boils down to repeating the cynicism of Benjamin Franklin who said that the only certainties in life are death and taxes. Go down this road of what you know for certain, and it may very well lead you to an existential crisis where you are pretty sure that there is nothing that you know for certain. What do we do with that? How can we live with total uncertainty in everything?

Job was a man who lived some 4,000 years ago but had to wrestle with uncertainty just as we do. He thought that he was good with God, that so were his kids as he offered sacrifices for them whenever they were done feasting just in case any of them had sinned in their hearts. Job thought he knew where all his wealth was, blessed with an abundance that should last him. But in one day, the LORD allowed Satan to take it all away, all his wealth that should have lasted, all his kids who were in good health.

Job was so certain of God’s love and justice for him that upon hearing that we had lost all this, he fell to the ground in worship of the LORD and said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.” (Job 1:21) Then the LORD allowed Satan to take away Job’s health. Job’s wife told him to curse God and die. Job still trusted and praised God as he answered his wife simply, “Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?” (Job 2:10) “In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.” (Job 1:22)

Three of Job’s friends arrived to comfort him. For seven days and seven nights they just sat and kept him company. Then the conversations began. Job knew that he had done nothing wrong, nothing that would cause all this trouble and suffering. However, with conversation after conversation, Job’s friends chipped away at his confidence. They claimed that no trouble would come on someone who was good with God, someone who had not done anything wrong. They knew that God brought trouble and suffering only to the wicked, to the sinner. The subtle implication grew to become a blatant accusation that Job had sinned greatly, so great that the LORD would certainly wipe Job and his name from the earth because that’s what they knew God did to the wicked.

What are the things that you once “knew” only to have doubts and uncertainty creep in, chip away at your foundation of knowledge based on faith? I’ve been a Christian all my life, never switched to the beliefs of another church. And now I’ve been a pastor for 15 years in the same national church body. I remember days as a boy, maybe around 8, 9, 10, when I fixated on this question: “What if this is all made up? What if the Bible is just a work of fiction? What if none of this is true? And if that’s so, then this has all been a waste of my time. My whole life up to this point has been meaningless, and it would be meaningless to continue.” For a moment, your heart stops and your breath is caught in your chest which starts to feel as if you will never exhale. In a flash you see your whole world crumble and come crashing down. Linger on it longer and you have a bona fide crisis of faith.

Maybe this is your crisis of faith right now. Maybe you’ve that same thought pop in and out of your mind. You try to dismiss it as soon as possible, but then it comes back again. You just never seem to get rid of it. Little by little the things that you know about God, about what you believe, erode. Your solid faith foundation chips away. You wonder what you can really know about God, about morality, about what comes next in life. You want to know that there is a meaning to life, to believing this.

So, you try to deal with the doubts, the uncertainties. You say your religious mantra over and over again, trying to achieve a cognitive dissonance that you can still believe these things even while feeling that they aren’t true. You try to “give yourself some grace,” but that doesn’t silence the doubts either. You think about trusting your feelings and jumping headlong into no longer believing this God stuff, but you know that your feelings change, that they’re fickle, uncontrollable, sometimes wrong. You look at your accomplishments, your good works, and try to take solace in those, that they give you meaning and purpose and value. But looking at me and what I do, I always know that I could be doing better. I could do more. I’m not enough. And all this will go away one day, like it did for Job. Now I sound more like Solomon in Ecclesiastes that meaningless, meaningless, everything is meaningless.

Maybe for you the crisis is already over. You once believed, but the doubts were too loud. You concluded that God is not real, maybe because he didn't answer your prayers, maybe because you've experienced too much suffering or spent too long watching other people suffer horribly. You've seen too much evil for there to be a good God. On top of that, you have seen too many "church" people use that dusty old book called the Bible to justify horrible and despicable acts upon the earth, upon fragile, innocent human beings. You're here today to appease mom and dad. You might even be on the other side now saying, "I know that this God and Bible stuff you're talking about is false." Yet what is left? Create your own meaning? But how do you create your own meaning without having something real and concrete to ground your beliefs to? How can we ever be certain about our beliefs?

While these doubts are rumbling away in Job's head, he makes a statement: "Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever!" (verses 23-24) Hey, I know something. I know something, and I want it recorded so that other people know it as well. I want to put this in the most permanent ink I can find in the most permanent place I can find so that these words stand forever, so that other people can have a foundation of knowledge to combat these doubts and uncertainties.

What does Job know? What is he so certain about? "I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (verses 25-27)

"I know that my Redeemer lives." (verse 25a) "I know." Not "I think." Not "I feel." Not "I believe." I know. This is knowledge that Job has. This is a fact. This is what he is basing his life on.

"I know that my Redeemer lives." (verse 25a) Redeemer is this neat word that describes someone charged with the duty of restoring the rights of another and avenging their wrongs. A redeemer is entrusted with securing someone's release from oppression, harm, evil, enslavement, or some other binding obligation. The redeemer pays the price for the other person to be set free, to buy them away from these things.

What is this Redeemer going to do for Job? He will secure Job's release from all of his friends' baseless and false accusations of wickedness against him. His Redeemer will pay the price for Job, making Job blameless and complete, not just before his friends, but before his God because his God is his Redeemer. The fact that God his Redeemer did his job will be revealed when Job is not destroyed and forgotten in death like the wicked, but that he will be raised from the dead. "And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another." (verses 26-27) Job's body will be restored. Then all the world will see that his Redeemer, his God, vindicated him because his God paid the price. This is what Job knows with absolute certainty because his God always keeps his Word.

On Easter Sunday, we get to make the same statement of what we know with absolute certainty because we have the same Redeemer as Job: Jesus Christ. Today, we celebrate the fact that Jesus did not stay in the tomb after that Friday when he died. Yes, on the cross Jesus did the redeeming thing by paying the price to set us free from sin, free from being enslaved to the devil, free us from an eternal stay in the hotel of hell. We know that our Redeemer lives! God kept his Word by raising Jesus from the dead three days as he promised. This act vindicated us as it is a declaration that Jesus' payment on our behalf was accepted. Our sins are paid for. All the times that we have doubted God, rejected God, thought that he was made up, these he has paid for, redeemed us, and God accepted the payment.

This is for us! I know that my Redeemer lives! And so I know that I am right with God right now. I will get to see God with all my sins paid for and expunged from my record. After I die, I will be raised from the dead and stand vindicated, like Job, by my Redeemer before the whole world. He has done it all. God keeps his promises. I can solidly have faith in him.

Now I want to write this in stone too, maybe on the rolled away stone from Jesus' empty tomb, kicking all my doubts into there instead. I too know that my Redeemer lives, and I want other people to know that their Redeemer lives too, that he has already paid everything for them, that they will be raised from the dead on the Last Day vindicated by our Redeemer, that he is a solid foundation to build our entire lives on. I know this, we know this, because Christ is risen, he is risen indeed. Alleluia! Amen!